

Safety & Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Network: Denver

In 2018, the city of Denver was selected to join the Vera Institute of Justice’s Safety and Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Network—a growing group of jurisdictions around the U.S. that are **committed to keeping families together and communities safe and strong** by protecting due process and providing legal representation to immigrants facing deportation. SAFE Network Members have dedicated public funding to deportation defense, focusing on serving individuals who are detained.



Why representation matters

Because immigrants facing deportation do not have the guarantee of an attorney to represent them, 70 percent of immigrants detained at the Aurora Detention Center face deportation alone.¹ Representation promotes due process and dignity, and results in better outcomes—represented immigrants are **up to ten times more likely to establish a right to remain in the United States.**²

SAFE Program Description: Denver, Colorado

Legal Service Providers: Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network

Populations Served: Detained residents of Denver who make under 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines

Detention Centers Served: Aurora Contract Detention Facility (Aurora, CO)

Method of Identifying Clients: Referrals from community and from the Legal Orientation Program at Aurora Contract Detention Facility

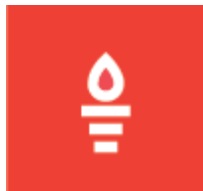
Sources

1. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC):

“Details on Deportation Proceedings in Immigration Court,” accessed September 19, 2019, <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/nta/>

2. Ingrid V. Eagly and Steven Shafer, “A National Study of Access to Counsel in Immigration Court,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 164, no. 1 (2015), 1-91, <https://perma.cc/82F5-WE2D>.

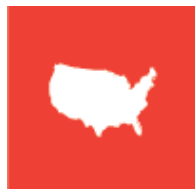
Making an Impact in Denver



36
Clients represented
in Denver, CO



39
Children with a
parent represented
in Denver



16
Average years
living in the
United States

*Data from 2/1/2019–1/14/2020

Client Stories



Jonathan, as a young boy, with his family.

Jonathan, a native of El Salvador, fled to the United States after being beaten by gang members and left comatose when he refused to join. Upon arrival, he reunified with his father—a lawful permanent resident—before moving in with his aunt in Denver, who he considers his “second mother.” After living in the U.S. for nearly two decades, Jonathan was apprehended by ICE and detained at the Aurora Contract Detention Facility.

At Aurora, Jonathan was offered representation by the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) through the SAFE Network. Before he met the RMIAN attorney, he already had an initial immigration hearing, and the immigration judge overlooked that

he was eligible for relief. It was only through legal screening by the attorney that Jonathan learned he was eligible to apply for a complex form of legal relief through his father. If not for the universal representation model and RMIAN’s counsel, he would have gone unrepresented and would have likely been deported.

After months of enduring separation from his family, Jonathan was granted relief, allowing him to live safely and securely alongside his loved ones in Denver. He aspires to start his own business, become a homeowner, and continue helping to support his aunt. Jonathan reports that his RMIAN attorney made sure he felt confident, empowered, and knew what to expect as he navigated the complicated legal process.

Roberto* has lived in the U.S. for over twenty years as a lawful permanent resident. Ten months ago, he was apprehended and detained in Aurora, Colorado. Although the immigration judge screened him for relief, it was not until he met an attorney from RMIAN that he learned he was eligible for Cancellation of Removal. Roberto and his SAFE attorney worked closely with his family to gather evidence of the hardship Roberto would face if deported from the United States. At the conclusion of his final hearing, Roberto was

granted relief from deportation.

When asked about this experience, Roberto said: “Once detained in ICE [custody]... days passed and I was confused. In reality, I [had] no idea how to face the proceedings, like many of the detainees that are here in the detention center... [My lawyer] not only allowed for me to retain my status as a permanent resident, but I can be together with my son and family.”



Roberto with his nieces and nephews.



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